

October 2004



GSL ONLINE

Montana's premiere student loan publication

www.mgslp.state.mt.us (800) 537-7508

UPCOMING EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS:

- *Federal Fiscal Year Begins:*
Oct. 1
- *Columbus Day Observed:*
Oct. 11 (Office Open)
- *RMAFSA Conference:*
Oct. 17-20 Omaha, NE

The Montana
Guaranteed Student
Loan Program provides
financial access to
students pursuing
postsecondary
educational goals.

Our FY2002 Cohort
Default Rate is 6.6%...
over one percent lower!

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THE DIRECTOR'S DEN - REAUTHORIZATION

We associate Fall with cold nights, leaves changing colors or dropping, and students returning to school. From most accounts, we understand that Peak processing went fairly well this year. GSL had several of its staff on site at various campuses to help with the workload. It's never too early to put your request in for next year – or even for tomorrow if you need help. Providing on-site assistance is something we enjoy doing. All you have to do is ask!

November elections are fast approaching. GSL has been actively watching for bills that might impact schools. There have been small flurries of activity around Pell and cost differences between FFEL and Direct, but nothing new that significantly threatens schools. We at GSL remain convinced that those types of far-reaching bills will likely be part of Reauthorization – which is still many months away.

Director of Operations, Patty Davis, and I have recently returned from Washington D.C. We visited with our congressional delegation and shared success stories about our schools and the students we serve. Regardless of your party affiliation, rest assured that our elected officials understand the significance of Pell Grants in Montana and they all support education!

Bruce Marks, Director

LIFE 101 FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

As part of its continuing effort to increase the attendance and success of students at the postsecondary level, MGSLP is purchasing a copy of the newspaper *Life 101* for every high school student in the state. This publication is available at two levels: one for freshman and sophomore students, and one for junior and senior students. Included inside the issues of *Life 101* are informative articles designed to assist high school students in making the transition to college and the adult world. In addition to compelling leadership profiles, *Life 101* features articles on careers, financial aid, life skills, and financial literacy. Distribution is set for late October or early November.

APPLICATION & LOAN HISTORY IN SCHOLARNET®

ScholarNet contains a detailed history on every loan and application from beginning to end. This includes loan origination, change transactions and disbursement information. It gives a full description of the event or change, the date and time it was done and who did it. To access this information, open up the loan or application in ScholarNet. Click on either Edit or View. Near the top of the page will be several links. Click on View Loan History or View Application History depending on the student's loan status.

The information is in a very user-friendly, easy-to-read format. If you would like additional information on this or any ScholarNet issue, please contact Carie Kelly @ 1.800.537.7508 or ckelly@mgslp.state.mt.us.

MGSLP GRANTS

MGSLP is pleased to announce the awarding of its first-ever MGSLP Grants. MGSLP Grants, which total \$200,000, represent the agency's desire to improve access to post-secondary education in Montana by providing direct aid to Montana residents. According to Bruce Marks, the Director of the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program, "These grants will go directly to students who otherwise might be unable to attend college due to their financial situations."

Working with the financial aid offices in Montana, MGSLP will allocate proceeds to each school based upon the undergraduate enrollment at each Montana school participating in the state's Higher Education Grant program. Using this formula, tribal and community colleges will receive a combined \$24,000, private schools a combined \$13,000, and university system schools will share \$163,000.

The agency's efforts have been nationally recognized through the *Morning Briefing* section of the National Council for Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP) website.

NEW FACES, PROMOTIONS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

New Faces:

- Diane Kuhl, MSU-Bozeman, Program Assistant - Scholarships
- Sarah Barutha, MSU-Bozeman, Program Assistant - Pell Grants, third party billing, fee waivers, grants and contracts

Promotions:

- Mandy Hansen, MSU-Bozeman, to Assistant Director

Accomplishments:

- Janet Riis, Carroll College, appointed Vice-Chair for the 2005 RMAFAA Summer Institute, 2006 Chair and 2007 Past Chair.
- Marti Pearce, Carroll College, completed her first marathon at the Montana Marathon in Billings Sept. 19.

Well Wishes:

- Dan Burke, UM-Missoula COT, retired in September after a total of 37 years of service, with 27 of those years in financial aid
- Announcing a financial aid engagement for Amber Hemry, Carroll College, and Jamie Dushin, MGSLP. A June wedding is planned.

As you welcome new faces into your offices and lives, take steps up on the career ladder and reach milestones, we would like to recognize you. E-mail Libby Siebens (lsiebens@mgsllp.state.mt.us) with any updates for the next newsletter.

FOCUS ON FINANCIAL AID FOLKS



Jessie Dufner, Financial Aid Director
Miles Community College

Her view on the world is the glass is half-full. This Miles Community College financial aid director always has a smile on her face and rarely turns down a request to help a student or friend.

Before entering the field of financial aid, Jessie Dufner worked closely with financial aid offices as an admissions representative at small institutions. She began as financial aid director in January 2003. "I find it profound how much impact our office has on the success of a student. At graduation time I feel most rewarded, because I see students receive diplomas who would not have completed college without the help they received through the federal student aid program."

Jessie and her husband Erik, a physical therapist, just celebrated their five-year anniversary. Together they have two animal children. Their cat, Trout, runs the house and keeps their energetic Weimaraner dog, Geist, in line. In her spare time she coaches jr. high tennis, plays the piano and enjoys the outdoors, especially fishing. Jessie grew up fishing at the runoff dam, stocked with trout and perch, on her parents' farm. She took up fly-fishing while working in admissions and hopes to be on the Bighorn River for her next vacation.

Favorite Quote: "Dreams – we don't see things as they are, we see things as we are."

-Unknown